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SB 2162 RELATING TO FISHING

Statement for
Senate Committee on
Agriculture, Energy and Ocean Resources
Public Hearing - February 10, 1988

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SB 2162 would establish an artificial reef research zone in Mamala Bay.

The statement on this bill does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

The Environmental Center concurs with the intent of this bill, however, we wish to suggest the following changes:

Delete (a) and substitute the text below:

Mamala Bay Artificial Reef Research Zone.

a) The Mamala Bay Artificial Reef Research Zone shall be established to promote the study of artificial reef technology and research relating to the conservation of marine resources. The ultimate goal in establishing this zone is to develop technology to enhance Hawaii's fishery resources.

b) It is unlawful for any person within the Mamala Bay Artificial Reef Research Zone to catch or take any aquatic life; provided that any researcher licensed by the Mamala Bay Artificial Reef Research Committee may do so for scientific purposes. The general public may continue utilizing the zone for non-consumptive purposes such as the underwater viewing of marine life, surfing, photography, etc.

(c) The Mamala Bay Artificial Reef Research Committee will be comprised of but not limited to individuals from the Department of Land and Natural Resources, the University of Hawaii, the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and will be established to review research to be conducted in the Mamala Bay Artificial Reef Research Zone.

(d) All laws enacted for the protection of aquatic life or wildlife shall likewise apply to the Mamala Bay Artificial Reef Research Zone, except that no person or person, other than those designated by this section, shall be authorized to catch or take aquatic life in this zone and then only for scientific purposes.

(e) The Mamala Bay Artificial Reef Research Zone shall be delineated according to the following description:

The zone shall be the area bounded on the inshore side by the shoreline extending from the Kewalo channel centerline to Honolulu entrance channel centerline. These centerlines are visually located by the lineup of their respective channel range markers. The offshore boundary line runs parallel to the shoreline and one thousand seven hundred yards from the shoreline and extending from Honolulu entrance channel buoy no. BW"H" on a bearing of one hundred thirty degrees true until it intersects with the Kewalo channel centerline extension which is visually located by the lineup of the channel range markers. There is no buoy marking this south corner of the zone.

The primary rationale for the proposed changes to SB 2162 is to broaden the base of research access to the Mamala Bay Artificial Reef Research zone. As presently written, the bill conveys full authority for management of the zone to the University of Hawaii. We feel that common management interests and jurisdictional responsibilities held by the other agencies suggested as co-managers, justifies their participation and appropriately ensures their involvement in key management decisions.

Changes to the nearshore boundary of the Research Zone have been suggested for three reasons: first to be effective, the zone must encompass a large and diverse area. Management and research activities may extend to the shoreline, thereby requiring inclusion of the shore in the protected area. Second, experience at the Moanalua Bay artificial reef has pointed out the need for a substantial buffer zone around artificial reef structures to isolate them from fishing pressures. Because the home ranges of many fish extend far beyond the confines of the reef, these fish have been taken in traps placed some distance from the artificial reef. By extending the protected zone to the shore, the placement of traps which

would jeopardize artificial reef research would be prevented. Finally, enlargement of the Research Zone will substantially simplify enforcement of the exclusion of consumptive activities by removing all ambiguity as to where the limits of the zone actually lie.

We believe that the suggested changes would expedite the application of this bill.

To our knowledge no state in the union has an artificial reef research zone that specifically excludes fishing. Enactment of this bill will help to establish Hawaii as a leader and center for habitat and fisheries enhancement technology. In addition, broadening the base of research access to the zone as accomplished by our proposed changes would have the ancillary benefit of encouraging commitment of additional Federal funding to Artificial Reef Research in the State of Hawaii.